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Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP79T00865A001600160002-7

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

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August 22, 1975

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USSR-Portugal: Zarodov and
the Problem of Portugal

On August 8, *Pravda* reprinted an article by K. I. Zarodov concerning Lenin's analysis of the abortive 1905 revolution in Russia. The article has attracted considerable attention, particularly in Western Europe, for its implications for the West European communist parties, for the Soviet Union, and even for Brezhnev himself.

Zarodov begins: "It is the summer of 1905. Russia is engulfed in the flames of revolution. All classes and parties are on the move." He goes on: "Seventy years have passed, but [Lenin's work] reads today as if it referred to events developing before our very eyes." Clearly, Zarodov is referring to Portugal.

Zarodov's line is tough, orthodox Leninism. He emphasizes that a communist party must maintain its hegemony, its separateness from other parties, and its commitment to lead the revolution. It is precisely this hegemony, he says, that makes it possible for a communist party to apply the "specific levers" that turn a "democratic revolution" into a "socialist revolution."

Zarodov is scornful of "modern conciliators" who believe that gaining control of the "levers of power" is the final act of the revolutionary process, which comes after some kind of "referendum" that expresses the will of the majority. Leninists, Zarodov says, know that the popular majority is a political, not an arithmetic, concept; i.e., the Communist party expresses the will of the majority, whatever the ballot box results may be.

Zarodov is providing an ideological rationale for Cunhal's tactics in Portugal. It justifies the Portuguese Communist party's infiltration of the state machinery and the military establishment. It sanctions the assertion of Communist control over the unions, the shut-down of *República*, and the use of violence against the party's opponents. At the same time, the article is not an unqualified endorsement of Cunhal's tactics. Some of Zarodov's observations can be interpreted as guarded criticism of the Portuguese Communist Party.

Zarodov's wider purpose is open to different interpretations. His article first appeared in the July issue of *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, of which he is the senior editor. It was written at a time when the Portuguese Communist party was in reasonably good shape, when it appeared to have an excellent chance of achieving power in Portugal despite its poor showing in the April election, and when its heavy-handed tactics were being openly criticized by the Italian Communists and other West European parties politically embarrassed and discomfited by their Portuguese colleagues' naked display of power.

Hence, it is possible that Zarodov's purpose was to tell the Italians and others that it was they, not Cunhal, who were the apostates and indeed, that the Portuguese situation might serve as the model for the coming to power of Communist parties in West Europe.

Zarodov may also have had an internal audience in mind. His article can be interpreted as part of an ongoing debate among Soviet theorists on the appropriate strategy and tactics of non-ruling Communist parties during the current stage of the "crisis of capitalism." In placing his emphasis on the "hegemony" of Communist parties, Zarodov is refuting theorists who have given heavier weight to the unity of action between the Communist and other parties.

In reprinting the Zarodov article, *Pravda* seems to be intervening on the side of the hardliners, thus raising the question of whether there has been a fundamental switch in Moscow away from countenance of the quasi-constitutional approach to achieving power, as exemplified by the Italian Communists, toward a more orthodox approach exemplified by the Portuguese.

One problem with this thesis is timing. When Zarodov was writing his article the Portuguese Communists were riding high: when *Pravda* reprinted it, the Portuguese party was under violent attack and in mortal danger. It is hard to believe that the Soviets would commend to the West European Communists and the world Communist movement an orthodox revolutionary model at exactly the time when the leading exemplar of that model totters on the brink of disaster.

It would take some fast, and probably unconvincing footwork, for Moscow to argue that the reaction against Cunhal is an example of what would happen to the Italians and French Communists if they were on the brink of gaining power. Cunhal has clearly been playing a different game than Berlinguer or Marchais.

One alternate hypothesis is that *Pravda's* message was more modest: that the West Europeans and others should not interpret a defeat for Cunhal as vindication of their own approach to achieving power.

It is also possible that Moscow reprinted Zarodov in *Pravda* merely as a token of its "solidarity" with the beleaguered Portuguese comrades. The Soviets always feel themselves under some obligation to protect their revolutionary credentials. The Zarodov article may have been viewed as sounding a militant note after the European security conference, and while Moscow prepares for a European communist party meeting.

The Soviets are making a valiant effort to have it both ways. Thus, their line on Portugal has consistently supported Cunhal's grab for power even while it supports the unity of action by the Communists and other parties. And thus Zarodov's boss, candidate Politburo member Ponomarev, last year wrote a widely discussed article on the lessons of Chile that emphasized the importance of controlling the levers of power, but last month was extolling the appropriateness and importance of maintaining relations between Communists and Social Democrats. Indeed, Ponomarev, and his superior, senior ideologist Suslov, were speaking at a conference commemorating the 40th anniversary of the popular front.

This is not to say that the situation in Portugal, and Zarodov's article, do not raise questions about the relationship between detente and the prospects for revolutionary change. The supporters of the current Soviet detente policy have cited Portugal as a case where revolutionary progress has been possible as a consequence of detente. If the Portuguese Communists come to a bad end, those who are less enamored of detente will have gained another string to their bow.

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Czechoslovakia: Repercussions
of Helicopter Incident

4 Prague is sharpening the tone of its commentaries on the recent helicopter violation of Czechoslovak airspace (*Staff Notes*, August 21).

213 A Czechoslovak Interior Ministry spokesman on August 21 said an investigation shows that the escape "was prepared by the military and security bodies of the Federal Republic of Germany." He also claimed that the helicopter was armed with a machine gun and that a Czechoslovak border guard was wounded.

3 The Czechoslovaks are continuing to harp on the Helsinki agreement in their protests. A recent domestic broadcast asked why such incidents should continue in view of the Helsinki agreement, and Prague has used the incident to accuse the West of being the first to violate the spirit of Helsinki. The most recent commentary self-righteously claimed that Czechoslovak border forces avoided taking "sharper action" against the helicopter in order to avoid endangering the lives of vacationing citizens in the area and to avoid killing those who boarded the helicopter.

1 Meantime, the West German Foreign Office has informed the US embassy that it regards the Czechoslovak protest as "definitely moderate." Bonn intends to delay a formal reply in the belief that all concerned would like to see the incident blow over.

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PUBLICATION OF INTEREST

Appearances of Soviet Leaders, January-June 1975,
A (CR) 75-29, UNCLASSIFIED. This publication pro-
vides a record of the known appearances of selected
Soviet public figures. Coverage includes members
of the CPSU Politburo and Secretariat, deputy
chairmen of the USSR Council of Ministers, and
leading officials of the Ministry of Defense.
Copies may be obtained from [redacted]

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